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MEDIA RELEASE: For immediate use

New Zealand Poultry Industry Prepared and On Watch as H5N1 Bird Flu Strain Reaches Australia

The New Zealand poultry industry says it is continuing an extensive programme of preparation, as the H5N1 strain of bird flu reaches Australian shores.

Fiona MacMillan, the Executive Director of PIANZ (the Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand) and EPF (Egg Producers Federation of New Zealand) says they are watching the situation in Australia carefully.

“We are calmly but carefully staying across the developments in Australia. Up till now, Australia, New Zealand and the wider South Pacific have been the only places in the world to be free of this variant of bird flu. New Zealand has a strong track record of keeping poultry disease out. It is harder with an infection like this, which is spread by wild birds, but that’s why we are so focused on biosecurity for our industry.”

She says egg and chicken meat producers have already put in years of preparation for bird flu.

“We have seen the serious impact of H5N1 on the poultry industry around the world. We are fortunate that we have had time to learn from their experiences. We’ve been using the time we’ve had to focus on our biosecurity practices, to work closely with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and to assist all poultry and egg farmers to get ready.”

And Ms MacMillan has issued a plea for all New Zealanders to stay aware of what’s happening with bird flu.

“If the H5N1 variant does get here, we hope everyone in New Zealand will pitch in to help, by following the advice put out by the MPI. The Ministry is already reaching out to hunters, trampers and backyard poultry owners, making sure they know what to look for and how to avoid spreading the disease themselves. Building that awareness can help our wild birds and our poultry industry too.”

ENDS



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Visit the industry biosecurity website at <https://birdflu.pianz.org.nz>

About PIANZ

The **Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand (PIANZ)** represents the interests of more than 99% of poultry meat producers in New Zealand. It ensures that producers meet exacting standards in animal welfare, stockmanship and food safety.

The goal of the New Zealand poultry industry is to remain a trusted, economic and safe source of food for consumers while meeting or exceeding the high standards imposed by world-respected regulatory bodies such as the Ministry for Primary Industries.

About EPF

The **Egg Producers Federation of New Zealand (EPF)** plays a vital and key role in the NZ Egg Industry by supporting and representing all NZ commercial egg farmer producers – including free range, barn and colony cage systems.

The **EPF** is governed by a Board of farmers who are voted in by its members. Their roles include facilitating industry collaboration, reporting statistics, advocating for the industry's best interests and promoting responsible, safe and sustainable practices. In doing so the **EPF** plays a pivotal role in ensuring the continued success, sustainability and growth of the New Zealand Egg Industry while maintaining best practices and stringent animal welfare standards, food safety and biosecurity regulations of all its members.